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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

6 April 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CEYLON

(Situation as of 1230 EST)

1. A spokesman for the Ceylonese Ministry of Defense described the security situation as "very, very serious" in a conversation with the US charge today at 1630 hours Ceylonese time (0600 hours EST). The mid-afternoon to dawn curfew imposed on the island early this morning remains strictly in effect. Colombo itself is fairly quiet, with power and phone systems operating, but security officials have refused to issue passes to permit US Embassy personnel to travel to the chancery during curfew hours. A skeleton staff is manning the embassy on a 24-hour basis.

2. The number of attacks upon police stations probably exceeds the 25 mentioned in the prime minister's early morning radio broadcast, and up to 200 insurgents have reportedly been killed so far. Communications with the city of Kandy, some 65 miles from Colombo, have been cut off; the road to Kandy is blocked at Warakapola, 36 miles from the capital, by insurgents who have captured a police station. Action is still going on in the Kegalle area, between Colombo and Kandy, much of which is apparently in rebel hands. Few trains in the interior are running and railway stations at several towns are out of commission following insurgent attacks. According to the US charge, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the security authorities will have little warning of further insurgent activity.

3. Ceylon's armed forces can mobilize to a total of approximately 14,000 active and inactive

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military personnel in 30 days; the military reserves, which at full strength only number about 10,000, are being called up now. The armed forces and the 11,500-man police force are poorly equipped and trained, although for the time being the army appears to be holding its own. The police, however, appear to be in trouble in a number of areas and both forces can be expected to run into increasing difficulties, particularly in the area of logistics, if the insurgency is prolonged.

4. The government has ordered all newspapers shut down and all schools have been closed.

5. Mrs. Bandaranaike was scheduled to call a cabinet meeting at 1500 hours (0430 EST) this afternoon and there was much speculation among members of the Colombo press corps that the meeting would result in a change of government. According to rumors circulating at the press club, Mrs. Bandaranaike could be forced to step down as prime minister and, if the army approved, "strong-man" Felix Dias Bandaranaike--who is related to her--would take over.

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